Laughter is the Best Medicine to Stress

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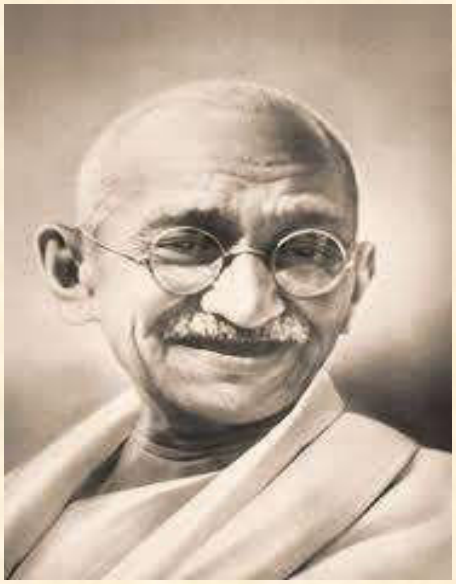
Humour

Humour (British English) or **humor** (American English; see spelling differences) is the tendency of experiences to provoke laughter and provide amusement. The term derives from the humoral medicine of the ancient Greeks, which taught that the balance of fluids in the human body, known as humours (Latin: *humor*, "body fluid"), controlled human health and emotion.

Laughter

- Laughter arising out of humor is conditional. It depends upon the person's intellectual ability, state of mind and level of happiness and life satisfaction. But laughter can be achieved unconditionally.
- Children laugh without any mental or cognitive ability to aid them in comprehending humor. Most of their laughter is an outcome of playfulness and inherent joyfulness.
- To develop the ability to laugh joyfully once again, adults must remove layers of inhibition, programming and mental roadblocks created by self, family, and society. Beneath these barriers lies an infinite ability to laugh for no reason.

Gandhi on Humour



If I had no sense of humour, I would long ago have committed suicide.

What are the various terms associated with humour and laughter.

Laugher means

1. The act of laughing
2. The sound produced by laughing.
3. An expression or appearance of merriment.

Laughter is a part of universal human vocabulary.

Humour

Humour relates to the quality of being funny. It conveys a comic, absurd or incongruous quality causing amusement.

Wit

A form of intelligent humour, the ability to say or write things that are clever and usually funny.

Repartee implies

a sharp or witty remark made as a reply

It is the skill in making sharp witty replies

Self Humour

is the act of belittling or under valuing oneself.

Mimicry

The art of imitation practiced by professional comedians who impersonate famous people on stage.

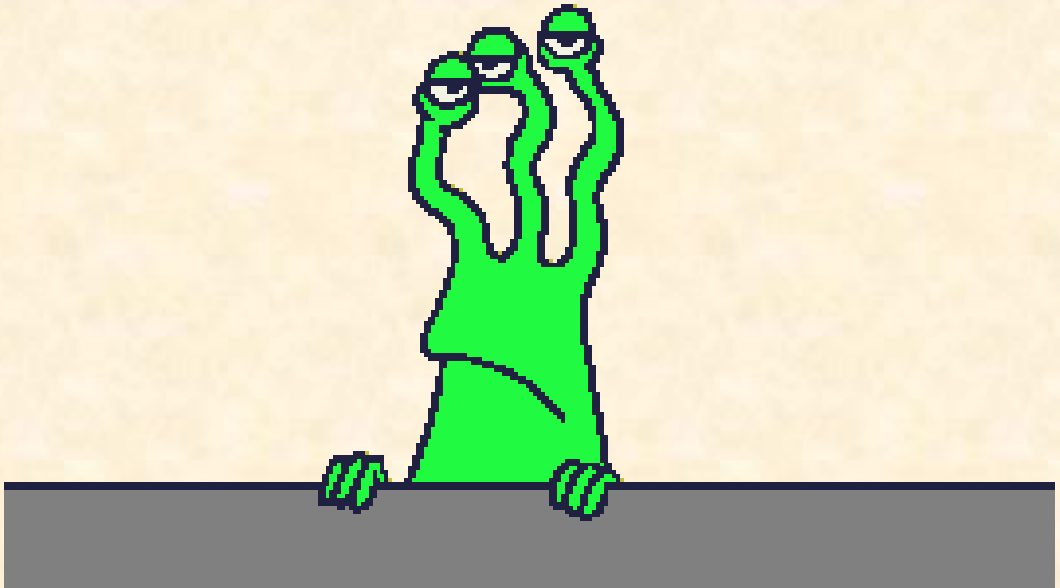
It is meant to make fun of the thing imitated.

Mimicry may take the form of mockery or parody on one hand, and impersonation on the other.

One Liner

A short joke or witticism, usually expressed in a single sentence.

A one liner is a joke in which the set up and punch line are in one statement.



5 CATEGORIES of LAUGHTER

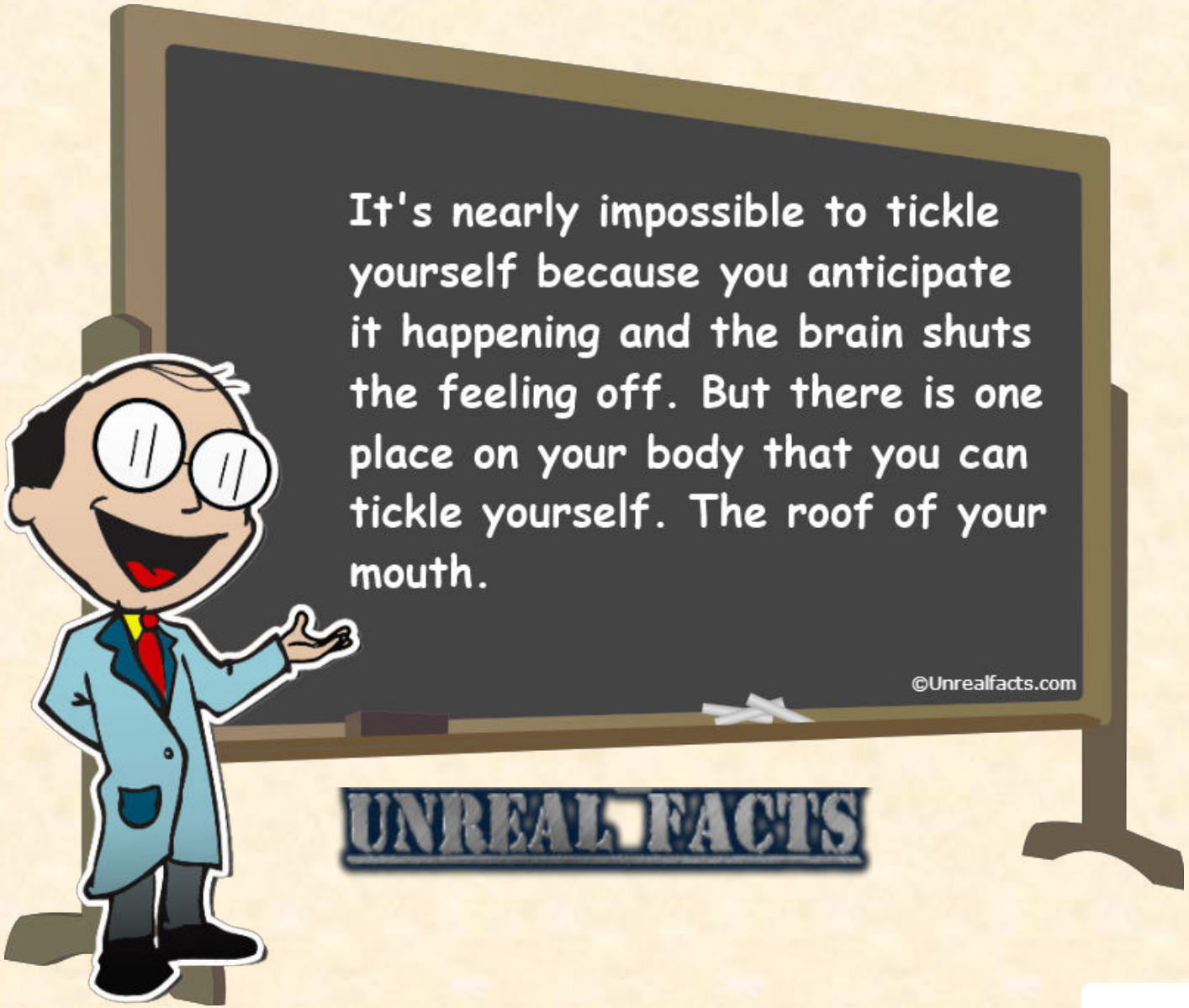
1. Spontaneous laughter. This is triggered by external stimuli and positive emotions.
Humour belongs to this group, amongst several other techniques.

It is important to note that **humour is a stimulus** that can occur without laughter, laughter is both an emotion and a response and can occur without humor.

5 CATEGORIES of LAUGHTER

2. Stimulated laughter happens as a result of the **physical contact** or action (reflex) of certain stimuli e.g. someone **tickles** you.
It is a frequent source of embarrassment when practised with strangers.

5 CATEGORIES of LAUGHTER


It's nearly impossible to tickle yourself because you anticipate it happening and the brain shuts the feeling off. But there is one place on your body that you can tickle yourself. The roof of your mouth.
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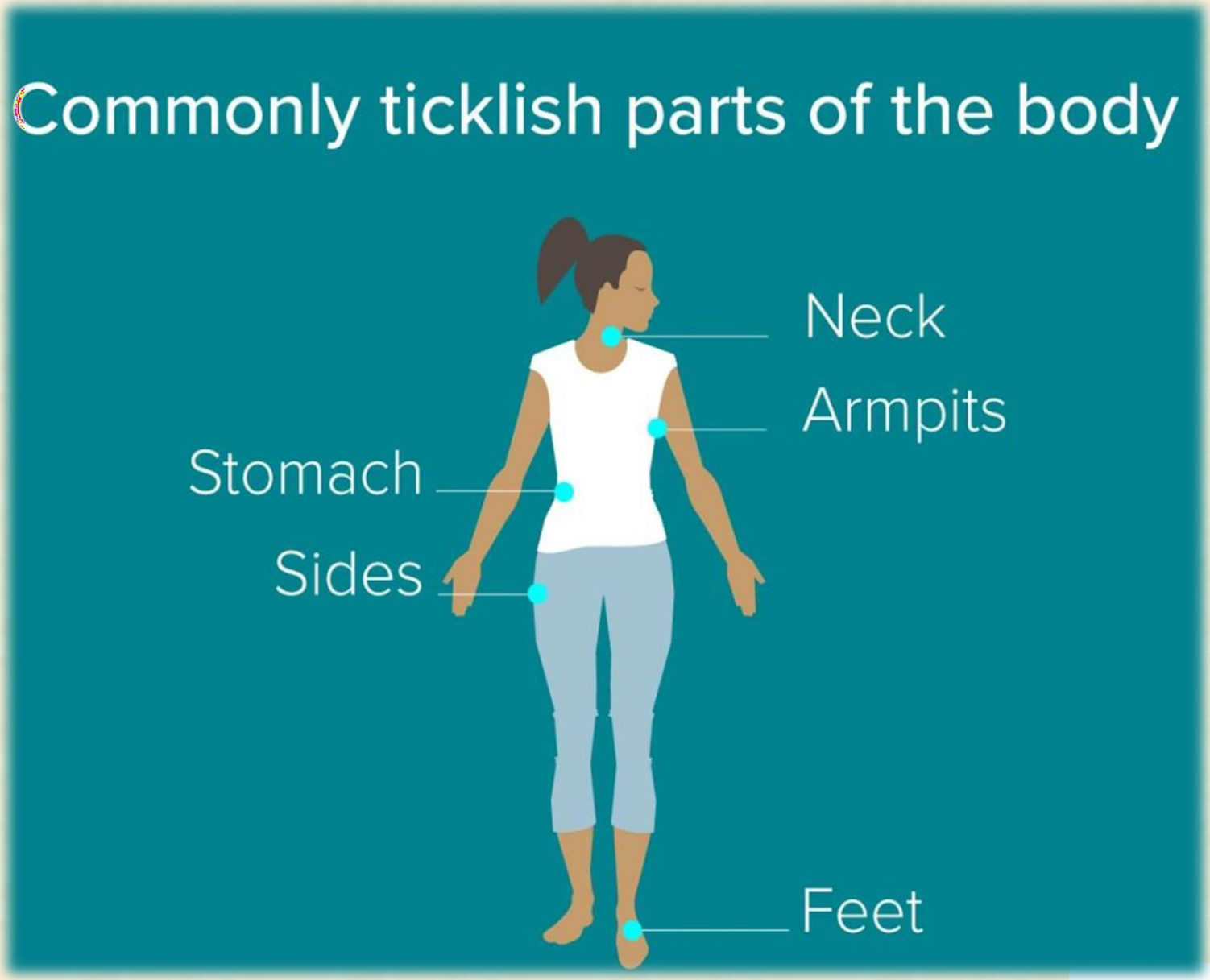
5 CATEGORIES of LAUGHTER



5 CATEGORIES of LAUGHTER

3. Induced laughter is of a chemical nature e.g., by inhaling **laughing gas** (nitrous oxide).

5 CATEGORIES of LAUGHTER

4. Pathological laughter is often associated with crying and tends to be **uncontrollable** and **excessive**. It is a relatively frequent consequence of **brain damage or emotional distress.**

5 CATEGORIES of LAUGHTER

5. voluntary simulated laughter, i.e., triggered by oneself at will (**self-induced**). It is the most universal and inclusive way to tap into your own inner cellular pharmacy and use laughter for **health** and **wellness**.

Laughter Yoga

Greet everyone with a laughter exercise.

1. Start by **introducing each other in gibberish**, using made up words instead of real words.

2. You can then initiate a greeting with a **handshake**, where you look into the person's eyes and laugh gently.

Laughter Yoga

Hearty laughter walkabout.

3. Walk around, find one person. Start **creating a conversation using laughter**. The person you are having conversation with must respond using laughter too.

4. Find 2 more persons.

The Benefits of Laughter and Humor in brief

- **Physical health benefits**
- Boosts immunity
- Lowers stress hormones
- Decreases pain
- Relaxes your muscles
- Prevents heart disease

- **Mental health benefits**
- Adds joy and zest to life
- Eases anxiety and tension
- Relieves stress
- Improves mood
- Strengthens resilience

- **Social benefits**
- Strengthens relationships
- Attracts others to us
- Enhances teamwork
- Helps defuse conflict
- Promotes group bonding

Reduces:
anxiety -
depression -
loneliness -
stress -
tension -

+ Increases production of endorphins
(feel-good hormones, a natural pain killer)

+ Improves ventilation,
thus helping reduce chronic respiratory conditions

+ Increases antibodies in saliva
that combat upper respiratory infections

+ Promotes cardiovascular health,
reduces blood pressure and heart rate

+ Secretes an enzyme
that protects the stomach from forming ulcers

+ Conditions the abdominal muscles

Decreases cortisol serum, thus providing an antidote for the harmful effects of stress

Aids in reducing symptoms of neuralgia and rheumatism

+ Changes perspective
+ Improves mental functioning
+ Improves self-esteem
+ Provides a sense of empowerment and control
+ Restores hope and energy

+ Exercises and relaxes muscles throughout the body
+ Helps move nutrients and oxygen to body tissues
+ Liberates interleukin 2 and other immune boosters

www.healinglaughter.org

Stress Management: Benefits of Laughter

- **Hormones:** Laughter reduces the level of stress hormones like cortisol, epinephrine (adrenaline), dopamine, and growth hormone. It also increases the level of health-enhancing hormones, like endorphins. Laughter increases the number of antibody-producing cells we have working for us and enhances the effectiveness of T cells. All this means a stronger immune system, as well as fewer physical effects of stress.
- **Physical release:** Have you ever felt like you have to laugh or you'll cry? Have you experienced that cleansed feeling after a good laugh? Laughter provides a physical and emotional release.
- **Internal workout:** A good belly laugh exercises the diaphragm, contracts the abs, and even works out the shoulders, leaving muscles more relaxed afterward. It even provides a good workout for the heart.

Stress Management: Benefits of Laughter

- **Distraction:** Laughter brings the focus away from anger, guilt, stress, and negative emotions in a more beneficial way than other mere distractions.
- **Perspective:** Studies show that our response to stressful events can be altered by whether we view something as a threat or a challenge. Humor can give us a more lighthearted perspective and help us view events as challenges, thereby making them less threatening and more positive.
- **Social benefits:** Laughter connects us with others. Just as with smiling and kindness, most people find that laughter is contagious. So, if you bring more laughter into your life, you can most likely help others around you to laugh more and realize these benefits as well. By elevating the mood of those around you, you can reduce their stress levels and perhaps improve the quality of social interaction you experience with them, reducing your stress level even more!

Humor is a key to success at work

- **People will enjoy working with you.** Humor--skillfully employed--is a great way to win friends and influence people. You need to be funny, but not snarky (that's not good for team building) and you can't offend anyone."
- **Humor is a potent stress buster.** "Humor offers a cognitive shift in how you view your stressors; an emotional response; and a physical response that relaxes you when you laugh."
- **It is humanizing.** "Humor allows both employees and managers to come together, realizing that we all seek common ground.
- **It puts others at ease.** Humor is a way to break through the tension barrier. "People who laugh in response to a conflict tend to shift from convergent thinking where they can see only one solution, to divergent thinking where multiple ideas are considered."

Humor is a key to success at work

- **Ha + ha = aha!** "Humor is a key ingredient in creative thinking," It helps people play with ideas, lower their internal critic, and see things in new ways. Humor and creativity are both about looking at your challenges in novel ways and about making new connections you've never thought about before. It establishes a fertile environment for innovation because people are more inspired when they are relaxed.
- **It helps build trust.** "You can build trust with the effective use of humor because humor often reveals the authentic person lurking under the professional mask," Humor is also viewed as sign of intelligence. All of these characteristics, as well as the fact that humor is a fabulous icebreaker and can tear down walls, can help people build relationships in the workplace, and especially these days, relationships are critical to success.

Humor is a key to success at work

- **It boosts morale.** Humor boosts morale and retention while reducing turnover because employees look forward to coming to work. Employees like to work for and with others who have a sense of humor. We all prefer to have fun at work. It should not feel like an indentured servitude environment.
- **People who use humor tend to be more approachable.** The more approachable you are, especially as a leader, the more honest and open people around you will be. And the more honest and open people tend to be, the more successful and innovative teams tend to be.

Humor is a key to success at work

- **Humor can allow your company to stand out.** "It can help companies stand out and go beyond with their customer service, garnering them a huge loyal following.
- **It can increase productivity.** "Humor creates an upbeat atmosphere that encourages interaction, brainstorming of new ideas, and a feeling that there are few risks in thinking outside the box. All that leads to greater productivity. It also stands to reason that if you're in a more cheerful atmosphere, you'll have more passion for what you do. Your work ethic will increase, and your enthusiasm will likely be contagious. It's a win-win for you and your employer.

Creating opportunities to laugh in brief

- Watch a funny movie, TV show, or YouTube video
- Invite friends or co-workers out to a comedy club
- Read the funny pages
- Seek out funny people
- Share a good joke or a funny story
- Check out your bookstore's humor section
- Host game night with friends
- Play with a pet
- Go to a "laughter yoga" class
- Goof around with children
- Do something silly
- Make time for fun activities (e.g. bowling, miniature golfing, karaoke)

How to Use Laughter

- **Laugh with friends:** Going to a movie or a comedy club with friends is a great way to get more laughter in your life. The contagious effects of laughter may mean you'll laugh more than you otherwise would have during the show, plus you'll have jokes to reference at later times. Having friends over for a party or game night is also a great setup for laughter and other good feelings. Making time for this kind of fun is as important as any other habit you keep in your life to support your health, and it's very possibly more enjoyable than most health habits as well.

How to Use Laughter

- **Find humor in your life:** Instead of complaining about life's frustrations, try to laugh about them. If something is so frustrating or depressing it's ridiculous, realize that you could 'look back on it and laugh.' Think of how it will sound like a story you could tell your friends, and then see if you can laugh about it now. With this attitude, you may also find yourself being more lighthearted and silly, giving yourself and those around you more to laugh about. Approach life in a more mirthful way and you'll find you're less stressed about negative events.

How to Use Laughter

- **Fake it until you make it:** Just as studies show the positive effects of smiling occur whether the smile is fake or real, faked laughter also provides the benefits mentioned above. The body can't distinguish between 'fake' laughter that you just start doing on purpose and 'real' laughter that comes from true humor. The physical benefits are exactly the same, and the former usually leads to the latter anyway. So smile more, and fake laughter; you'll still achieve positive effects, and the fake merriment may lead to real smiles and laughter.

How to Use Laughter

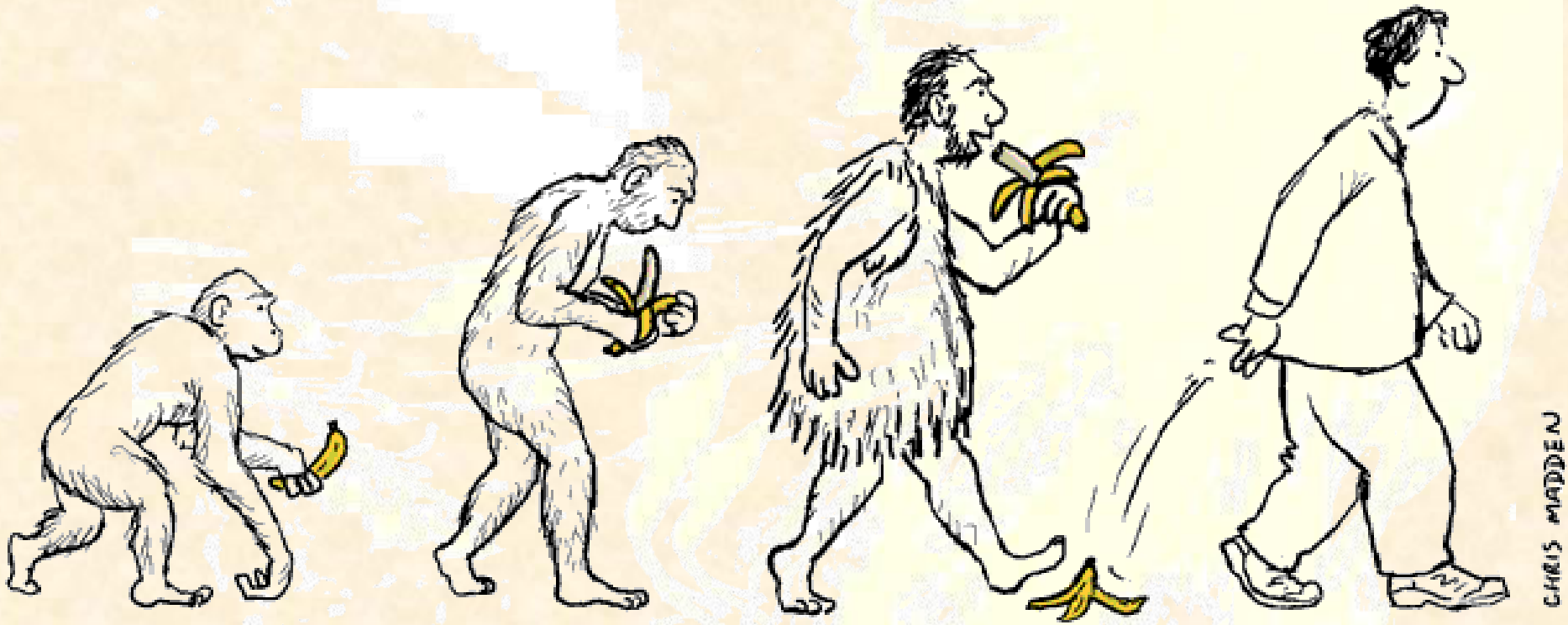
- **Media:** There's no shortage of laughter opportunities from entertainment, both at the theater as well as at home with streaming movies and T.V. comedies. While wasting your time watching something marginally funny may actually frustrate you, watching truly hilarious movies and shows is an easy way to get laughter into your life whenever you need it. You may want to share your recommendations with friends and you'll have something to reference and laugh about together.

Find your inner child

- **Find your inner child.** Pay attention to children and try to emulate them—after all, they are the experts on playing, taking life lightly, and laughing at ordinary things.

- Most of the children's laughter is an outcome of playfulness and inherent joyfulness.

THE EVOLUTION OF HUMOUR



Thank you